

United States Senate

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

As the Senate works towards a bipartisan agreement on a third relief package to help address the significant needs of our communities during the COVID-19 health crisis, we urge you to provide strong support for our child and elder care systems. This support should not only provide additional assistance to low-income families, but also to health care workers and employees in other critical industries. As such, we request that any deal include robust and necessary funding for vital programs like Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG), as well as language to ensure that this funding go directly to assist low-income families, health care workers, and employees of other critical industries. We also request that the Senate package include proposed funding streams to Social Services Block Grants that will further help to alleviate the burden of child care and elder care costs on our health care workers.

School closures are increasingly widespread across the country, with nearly 54 million students reportedly either temporarily out of school or engaging in distance learning from their homes¹. While these closures are a necessary localized piece of our national efforts to flatten the curve and decrease the burden on our healthcare system, it also places an increased strain on parents—particularly those employed in critical industries that must continue to work throughout this crisis. Additionally, we know that COVID-19 has resulted in closures of senior centers and reduction of options for elder care for many health care workers who live with elderly individuals who will require assistance while a health care worker is on shift work.

Our health care personnel are working to save lives and bring us out of this emergency as quickly as possible. They are on the front lines of this fight, often placing themselves in high-risk situations for the good of our communities and our society. As they care for our loved ones who are sick and search to find treatments and vaccines, we must make sure that we give them the resources they need to care for their own families as well.


¹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/meet-the-press/school-closures-skyrocket-nearly-54-million-students-sent-home-n1165946>

Again, we urge the Senate to include strong funding for CCDBG in any final relief package, as well as language that ensures that this money goes directly to assist low-income families, health care workers, and employees of other critical industries. We also support the inclusion of other funding streams specifically designed to help our health care and other frontline workers obtain child and elder care for the duration of this crisis. We appreciate your attention to this issue for our families and communities.

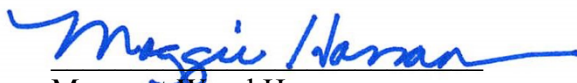
Sincerely,




Robert Menendez
United States Senator



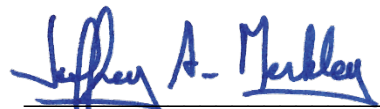
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator